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SUBJECT: DANES AWARE OF US CLIMATE CONCERNS

REF: STATE 24257

¶1. (SBU) Summary: Denmark is well aware of U.S. concerns that action by the European Council to set 25-40 percent emissions reduction for the EU and developed countries could undermine, rather than support, prospects for successful conclusion of a post-2012 international climate change agreement. As of late on March 12, Danish officials did not expect the Council to go beyond its 2007 commitment to an EU reduction of 20 percent from 1990 levels by ¶2020. End Summary.

¶2. (SBU) The Ambassador joined CEQ Chair Connaughton and Deputy NSA Price to convey reftel points to Danish Minister for Climate and Energy Connie Hedegaard in a March 8 meeting in Washington. The Ambassador described this as a thorough and vigorous exchange during which the climate minister said "don't put too much emphasis on 25-40 percent. The thing that the EU is really saying is that we need short term goal." The key for the EU is the 450 ppm cap, according to the minister.

¶3. (SBU) ESTHoff conveyed the points on March 12 to two members of the Danish delegation to the European Council meeting: Martin Lindgreen, office director in the climate and energy ministry; and Stig Henneberg, special advisor to the Prime Minister for EU and Climate.

¶4. (SBU) Both Lindgreen and Henneberg responded that U.S. concerns were well known to the Danish government. Henneberg cited Prime Minister Fogh Rasmussen's visit to President Bush's ranch at Crawford February 29-March 1, Minister Hedegaard's meetings in Washington with U.S. officials (on March 7 with G and March 8 at CEQ), as the most recent basis for this understanding.

¶5. (SBU) Lindgreen defended the 25-40 percent emissions reduction target as what the IPCC deemed necessary to halt climate change. That said, he recognized a tension between "what needs to be done to stop warming, and what it is possible to agree upon" in UNFCCC negotiations.

¶6. (SBU) Henneberg said after some initial confusion over the European Council agenda, Denmark had clarified that the 25-40 percent target recommended by the EU's council of environment ministers would not be the subject of the March 13-14 Council meeting. Rather, the Council would "no doubt" reaffirm its "already ambitious" March 2007 commitment to a 20 percent emissions reduction from 1990 levels by 2020. The Council would also discuss principles and timetables for legislation needed to achieve these earlier targets, he said.

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